



DPCC Fact Sheet: The Role of the U.S. Attorney General in Combatting Human Trafficking

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and its leader, the U.S. Attorney General, play an important role in combatting human trafficking.

- The statutes prohibiting human trafficking are rooted in Thirteenth Amendment protections. As a result, the DOJ's Civil Rights Division plays a leading role in the fight against trafficking criminals. [DOJ, accessed [3/9/15](#)]
- Although several federal agencies investigate incidents of trafficking, the DOJ and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) share the "primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting traffickers." This makes the U.S. Attorney General a critical role in the fight against trafficking. [CRS, [5/1/14](#)]
- Agents in DOJ's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and in the DHS' U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) investigate the majority of trafficking cases, which are then prosecuted by the DOJ. Agents in the FBI's Civil Rights Unit also investigate trafficking in the U.S. [CRS, [5/1/14](#)]
- The Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section "provides services to victims of civil rights violations, including human trafficking." These services include access to Victim/Witness Coordinators who are able to help victims access "case management, housing, medical care, counseling and shelter." [DOJ, accessed [3/9/15](#)]
- In 2007, DOJ's Civil Rights Division created the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit (HTPU) within the Criminal Section, which allowed the agency to "consolidate the expertise of some of the nation's top human trafficking prosecutors." [DOJ, accessed [3/9/15](#)]
- In July of 2011, the DHS, DOJ, and Department of Labor began a pilot program that created Anti-trafficking Coordination Teams around the U.S. and connected federal agents and investigators from these agencies with federal prosecutors from US Attorneys' Offices to develop significant federal human trafficking investigations and prosecutions. [CRS, [5/1/14](#)]

KEY FACTS:

- Trafficking investigations and prosecutions have increased dramatically, as “demonstrated by a 360 percent increase in convictions for the fiscal years 2001-2007 as compared to the previous 7-year period.” [DOJ, accessed [3/9/15](#)]
- “In the three fiscal years from 2009 to 2011, the Department brought an average of 24 forced labor cases annually, more than doubling the average of 11 cases brought annually over the prior 3-year period from 2006 to 2008.” [DOJ, accessed [3/9/15](#)]
- Since 2010, the Civil Rights Division’s HTPU has worked with U.S. Attorneys to prosecute a “record numbers of labor trafficking, international sex trafficking, and adult sex trafficking cases – 56 percent more than in the previous five years.” [DOJ, [1/29/15](#)]
- DOJ continues to strengthen its partnerships with DOL and other federal entities such as ICE and the FBI and to use its inter-agency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Team Initiative to better “identify and develop more labor trafficking cases.” These efforts have proven effective and have resulted in monetary recovery for trafficking victims, including, for example, “a domestic servitude conviction that resulted in [the] payment of \$80,000 in restitution to two Filipina victims in Kansas City, Missouri, and an indictment charging ten defendants in a combined forced labor and sex trafficking scheme in El Paso, Texas.” [DOJ, accessed [3/9/15](#)]
- In Fiscal Year 2005, the DOJ “estimated that there were between 14,500 and 17,500 victims trafficked into the United States each year.” Unfortunately, because the nature of human trafficking makes it difficult to estimate the number of trafficking victims in the U.S., this is the most recent estimate as of January 2014. [CRS, [5/1/14](#)]
- As the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York (EDNY), Loretta Lynch has made fighting human trafficking one of her top priorities. [DOJ, 12/17/14]
 - The New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition recently named Ms. Lynch one of “New York’s New Abolitionists” for her leadership in the fight against human trafficking. [DOJ, 12/17/14]
- Over the last ten years, the EDNY’s anti-trafficking program “has indicted over 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases and rescued over 110 victims of sex trafficking, including over 20 minors.” [DOJ, 12/17/14]